

# THE STAIRWELL AGREEMENT

## A Emotional Drama 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

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| <b>Genre:</b> Emotional Drama                                                    | <b>Format:</b> 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) | <b>Runtime:</b> 5 - 8 Minutes    |
| <b>Cast:</b> FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast)   Character 1: Imran (45) | <b>Language:</b> Hinglish                        | <b>Credit:</b> Story Dil Se Team |

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Imran har shaam grocery bag aur cane ke saath wahi stairwell ka chakkar lagata hai, aur Farah bhi almost usi waqt apni floor se neeche aa jaati hai. Dono ki timing itni suspiciously perfect hoti hai jaise building ne koi chhota sa secret schedule bana rakha ho. Yellow bulb ki peeli roshni, concrete walls, aur khidki se aati shaam ki dhundhli hawa—iss narrow stairwell mein dono ki zindagi ka shor thoda kam ho jaata hai. Pehle din ki awkward “Oh, aap?” se shuru hua silsila dheere-dheere ek quiet ritual ban gaya. Imran hamesha groceries ko adjust karta, cane ko railing se tikata, aur koi na koi bekaar si baat nikaal leta—“Aaj phir sabzi wale ne dhokha de diya.” Farah halki si muskurahat ke saath jawab deti, “Aapko lagta hai sabzi wale hi aapke dushman hain?” Dono hans dete, phir ek second ke liye chup ho jaate. Us khamoshi mein unke andar ke tootey hue hisse zyada clearly sunai dete.

Imran ki wife ka inteqal kuch mahine pehle hua tha, lekin usne building ke logon se bas itna kaha tha ki “ghar mein thoda akela pan hai.” Farah recently separated thi, aur uske folded letter mein uske naye flat ka notice tha—city ke doosre kone mein, ek chhota sa rented room, jahan uski purani zindagi ka kuch bhi nahi jaa raha tha. Woh letter uske haath mein ek ticket ki tarah tha, jise woh baar-baar fold aur unfold karti, jaise final decision ko delay kar rahi ho. Imran notice karta tha ki Farah jab stair railing pakadti hai to uski knuckles safed pad jaati hain. Farah notice karti thi ki Imran jab cane uthata hai to pehle thoda rukta hai, jaise dard se pehle apni izzat bachana chahta ho.

Unki roz ki mulaqat ek chhoti si agreement ban gayi—koi naam nahi, koi promise nahi, bas ek routine jisme dono apni sachchai ka ek tukda chhupa kar rakhte. Imran kabhi kehta, “Aaj lift phir se kharab hai,” jabki lift ka masla usse farq hi nahi padta. Farah jawab deti, “Building ko drama pasand hai.” Dono ke beech yeh light banter unke asli dard par ek patla sa kapda tha. Ek shaam Farah ke haath mein folded letter thoda zyada crumpled tha. Imran ne poocha, “Sab theek?” Farah ne pehli baar seedha uski aankhon mein dekh kar kaha, “Nahi. Main ja rahi hoon.”

Imran ne kuch seconds kuch nahi bola. Sirf grocery bag ka handle aur tight pakad liya. Farah ne jaldi se add kiya, “Bas yahin se nahi. Shehar se. Kal subah.” Uske lafz dheere the, jaise woh khud bhi unhe sunna nahi chahti. Imran ne halki si hansi mein dard chhupaya, “Achha. Toh aaj stairwell ka last episode hai.” Farah ne apna house key dikhaya, “Lagta hai.” Phir ek silence aaya jo pehle wale silences se alag tha. Is baar usmein goodbye ka weight tha.

Farah ne confess kiya ki usne letter teen din pehle likha tha, lekin bheja nahi. Uske ex ne wapas aane ki baat ki thi, phir bhi usne decide kar liya tha ki woh kisi half-life mein nahi rahegi. Imran ne dheere se kaha, “Sahi kiya.” Farah ne poocha, “Aap?” Imran ne cane ko railing par set kiya, jaise ek lamhe ke liye khud ko khada karna ho. “Main bhi kuch sahi karna chahta tha,” usne bola, “par aadat ho gayi thi ki jo chahiye, uske baare mein bolna hi nahi.” Farah ne uski taraf dekha, samajh gayi ki woh sirf building ki baat nahi kar raha.

Tab Imran ne ek ajeeb sa, almost comic honesty wala confession kiya: “Main roz yahan aata tha kyunki mujhe laga agar main seedhiyon par tumse milta rahunga, toh kam se kam ek insaan toh hoga jo mujhe dekh kar muskurata hai.” Farah pehle hansii, phir uski aankhen bhar aayin. Usne softly kaha, “Aapko pata hai, main bhi wahi soch kar yahan slow chalti thi.” Dono ne ek dusre ko dekha—na romance ka loud declaration, na dramatic music, bas do thake hue log jo ek dusre ke saath thoda zinda mehsoos kar rahe the.

Climax mein, Farah ne apni house key Imran ki taraf badhayi. Imran ne confuse hoke poocha, “Yeh kyun?” Farah boli, “Kal subah main chali jaungi. Agar aap mujhe rokna chahte ho, toh abhi bol do. Agar nahi, toh is key ko yaad rakhna—main waapas aayi toh aapko stairwell mein pretend karne ki zarurat nahi padegi.” Imran ne key nahi li. Usne sirf apni grocery bag zameen par rakhi, cane ko side mein kiya, aur pehli baar seedha, bina mazaak ke bola: “Farah, main tumhe rokna nahi chahta. Main bas yeh kehna chahta hoon... agar tum ja rahi ho, toh main tumhare jaane ke baad khali stairwell mein khada rehne ka natak nahi karunga. Main tumhe phone karunga. Aur agar tum allow karo, toh main tumse milne aaunga. Bahar. Building ke bahar. Asli life mein.”

Farah ki saans ruk si gayi. Phir usne key apni mutthi mein band kar li aur muskura di—iss baar ek aisi smile jo goodbye se zyada promise lag rahi thi. “Toh agreement pakka?” Imran ne pehli baar bina cane ke, railing ko pakde bina, seedha khade hoke kaha, “Pakka.” Bulb ke neeche, stairwell ka chhota sa private world ek nayi possibility se bhar gaya. Jab Farah neeche utarne lagi, Imran ne dheere se uska naam liya. Woh mudhi. Imran ne, jaise zindagi mein pehli baar kisi dar ko todte hue, kaha: “Kal subah jaane se pehle... chai peene aaogi?” Farah ne hansii aur aansuon ke beech haan mein sar hila diya. Aur ek building ke beech ki patli si seedhiyon par, dono ne apni khamosh aadat ko ek naya naam de diya.